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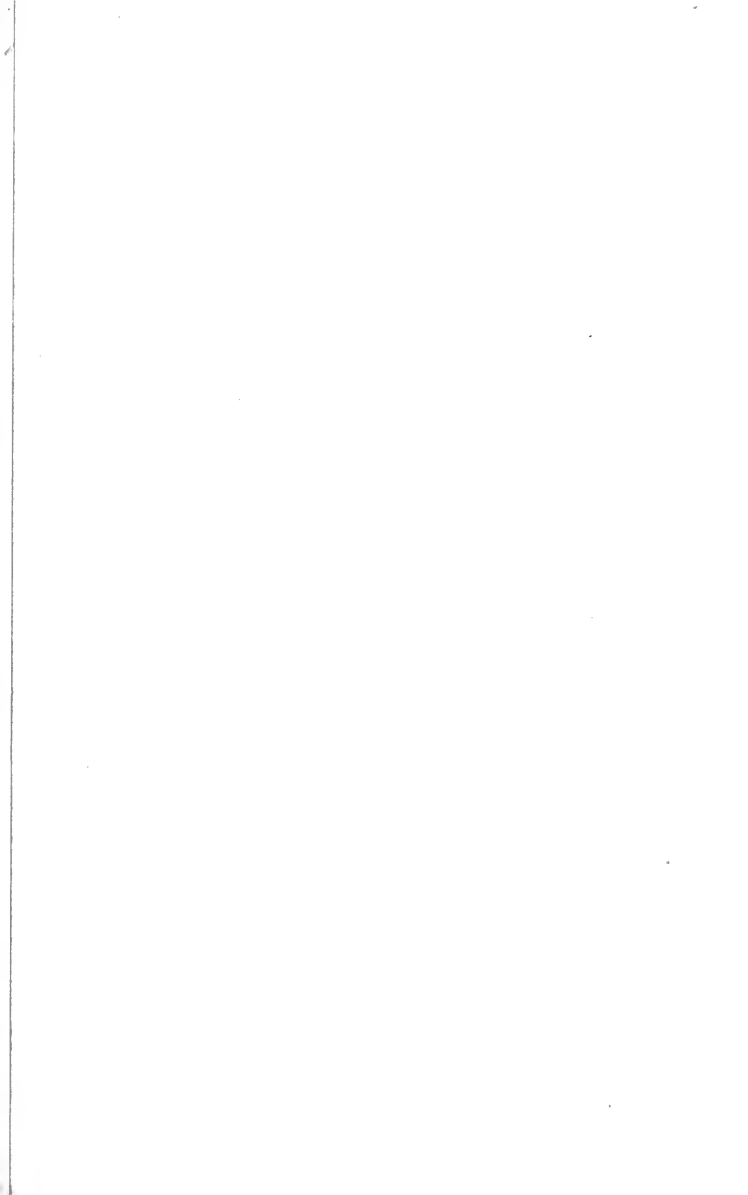
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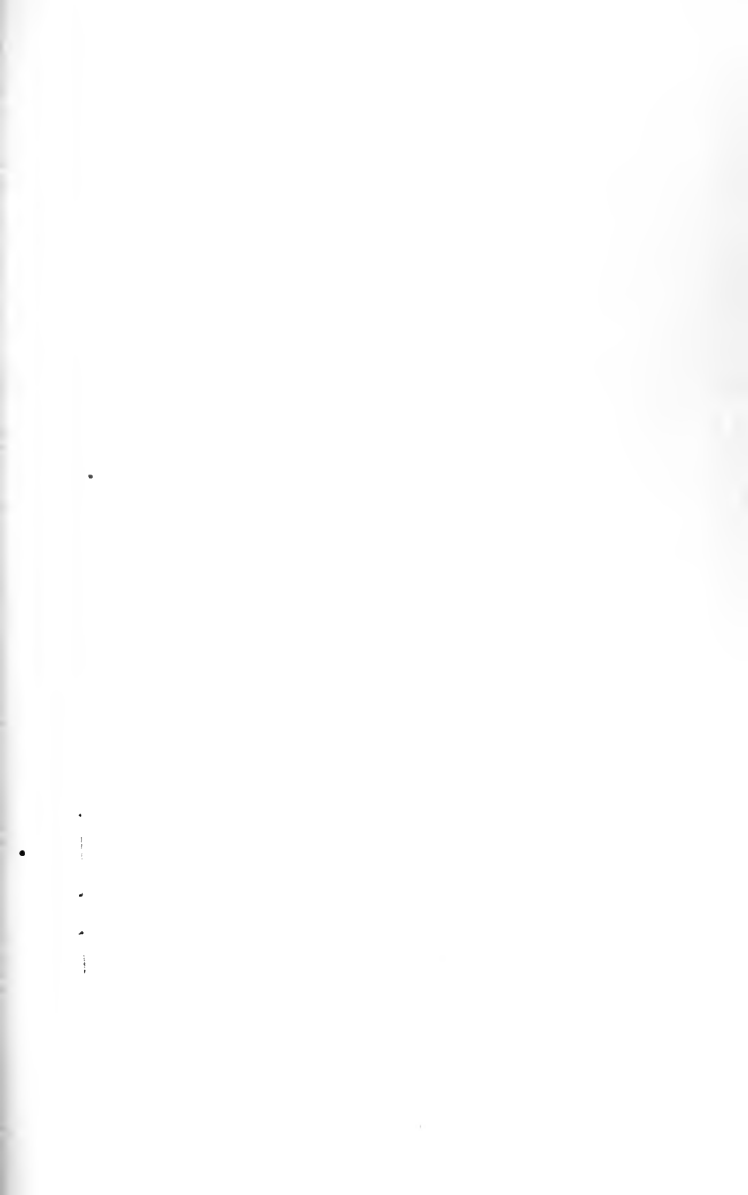
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SIX SERMONS
ON
Devotion to
THE SACRED HEART.

BY
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TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

BY
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Imprimatur,

MICHAEL AUGUSTINE,

Archbishop of New York.

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PREFACE.

“WHEN the world denies you help, have recourse to the Divine Heart of your Redeemer Who overcame the world, and Who does not forsake us. This Heart is an impregnable fortress, an ever-open refuge in all our needs. To this Divine Heart overflowing with love and mercy we vow and consecrate ourselves, and all the souls confided to our care, for time and eternity.” These solemn words of the right reverend bishops were the occasion of these sermons being preached and published. They were preached in the church of St. Lambert, and published almost without alteration.

THE AUTHOR.

Munster Feast
of the Conversion of St. Paul,
1886.

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SIX SERMONS
ON
DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART.

FIRST SERMON.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

“I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?”—*Luke* xii. 49.

BELOVED brethren, our holy mother the Church to-day hails the opening of Lent with these beautiful words, “Now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation,” and in the words of the prophet thus exhorts us: “Be converted to Me, saith the Lord, with all your heart, in fasting, and in weeping, and in mourning. And rend your hearts and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God: for He is gracious and merciful, patient and rich in mercy” (*Joel* ii. 12). This is the message, this is the exhorta-

tion, which the bride of Christ addresses to all her children.

Obedient to the voice of our common mother, we have begun the fast, and so entered upon the fulfilment of God's first command: "Be converted to Me with all your heart in fasting!" But we may not and will not be content with this, for we know that the bodily fasting unaccompanied with spiritual dispositions and works does not satisfy God, and therefore cannot be efficacious for us. Our fast, to be salutary and fruitful in blessing, must be united with that of the soul, which must refrain from all sin, bewail its offences, and turn to God with all its strength. This is what God expects of His children; hence it is that the Church addresses us every year this earnest invitation: "Be converted to Me with all your heart, in fasting, and in weeping, and in mourning. And rend your hearts and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God!"

The prophet does not enforce this earnest exhortation with threats of God's awful judgment, nor with instances of the terrible fate which the hardened sin so frequently meets. Oh no, not through fear, only through love would He move your hearts: "Turn to the

Lord your God: for He is gracious and merciful, patient and rich in mercy." After the manner of God's excessive goodness and superabundant mercy does the Church also admonish us. Therefore I will follow the spirit of holy mother Church in the Lenten sermons of this year, and endeavor to awaken and excite love with love, and place before you an object truly fitted to excite true contrition and awaken loving dispositions in your hearts.

When I make known to you the subject which we shall consider during this holy time, many doubtless will hail it with pleasure, others with a shrug of indifference, and many will deem it unsuitable. I am familiar with these various spiritual dispositions, and I think I can make my object clear; and with the assistance of divine grace which Christ has so abundantly merited for us, and so solemnly promised us, I hope not only to strengthen and increase the joy of the first, but to lead the second and third to share therein. May God bless my words, and prepare your hearts to receive them.

He who is not a stranger in Israel, that is, who has not lived outside the life of the Catholic Church, must have observed that

the faithful, particularly during the last ten years, have adopted a devotion which the majority of us had hardly heard of in our youth. And it has arisen so marvellously that the quiet thinker naturally asks the source of its extraordinary progress. For it has already made a deep impression upon the people; its followers are counted, not by hundreds or thousands, but by millions; it is daily spreading more and more, and producing most beautiful fruits. That this is a well-known fact all will concede when I say that I am speaking of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

It may at first appear that I have chosen a subject, which is not sufficiently rich or copious to afford much food for reflection. It is a subject, on the contrary, which is not easily exhausted; and the difficulty is, not to discover matter, but rather to choose from the abundance it affords. To-day I will not enter at once upon the devotion itself, but endeavor to show *what relation true faith in Christ bears to this devotion*. I would first awaken or increase your interest in it, and endeavor further to fully and completely remove any previously existing doubts, scruples, or difficulties. For this purpose I will

bring before you the indisputable testimony and ordinances of those whom the Holy Ghost has appointed to govern the Church of God. As it is frequently said that a devotion which appeals to French, Italian, Spanish, and other southern nations is not suitable for a less imaginative race, I will set before you the utterances and ordinances of German bishops concerning devotion to the Sacred Heart, and draw therefrom salutary and practical conclusions.

In 1869, when the German bishops were preparing, in obedience to the Sovereign Pontiff, to proceed to the Vatican Council, they addressed to the faithful confided to their care words of counsel and comfort in a joint pastoral of September 6th, which closed with these words: "*We are about to leave our dioceses for a long absence, and our hearts are deeply sensible of the dangers of the times; therefore we have resolved and ordered that a triduum in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, beginning on the 8th of December, be held in all the parishes of our dioceses.*" The bishops to the number of twenty thus gave a public testimony of their lively faith and boundless confidence in the Heart of Jesus. Clearly before them rose the dangers which threat-

ened their flocks; and like true shepherds they sought for them protection and safety, and found both in filial adoration of the Heart of Jesus. Therefore they earnestly commended it to the faithful.

The right reverend bishop John George, who was prevented by illness from attending this assembly, announced the triduum to his diocese in a pastoral—the last he was to write. The pious shepherd closed his letter with an earnest recommendation of this devotion. “I take this opportunity,” he wrote, “to recommend to you generally zealous devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and particularly participation in the association called the Apostleship of Prayer. It is particularly in these necessitous times that we should unite in prayer for all men, and for the interests of the Church that we should imitate the activity of the Apostles, and go by means of prayer throughout the world, offering all our works to the holy, adorable, and all-merciful Heart of our Divine Redeemer in behalf of the numerous needs and trials of the Church and of our fellow-men, particularly the salvation of the latter.” This was a holy bishop’s last exhortation, the departing shepherd’s farewell to his flock, the

father's last bequest to his children. Shall we receive it with indifference?

Owing to the unfavorable condition of the times the bishops returned from the Council earlier than was expected. On their arrival in their dioceses their apostolic voices were again heard in a second pastoral, warning their flocks of the errors and snares which surrounded them: men inflated with pride were endeavoring to pervert the truth, and wrest the faithful from the one saving Church of Rome. This circular of the end of August, 1870, also closed with the following earnest recommendation of devotion to the Divine Heart of Jesus: "*Pray with confidence in the merits and infinite love of the Divine Heart of Jesus, through the intercession of the immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of God.*"

And as the condition of the times grew worse from day to day, and the Church was everywhere slandered, calumniated, and persecuted by her enemies, the bishops of the German Empire again assembled at the grave of the apostle of Germany, St. Boniface, to unite in prayer for the sorely tried Church of God, and confer together in council upon the means of averting the threatened dangers and preserving the rights of the Church.

On this occasion twenty-two archbishops and bishops, together with the representatives of two bishops who were unable to be present, assembled in Fulda from the 17th to the 20th of September, 1872. They were all of one heart and one mind, and here again rendered a new and brilliant testimony of their confidence in the Divine Heart of Jesus by unanimously resolving: *That from the feast of All Saints until the beginning of Lent, on every Friday, or, where not convenient, on every Sunday, there should be public and solemn devotion in all the churches in honor of the Divine Heart of Jesus, together with solemn exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.*

Each of the bishops hastened to communicate this unanimous resolution to his flock, and they seemed to vie with one another in praising and honoring the Divine Heart of Jesus, as the following lines from the pastoral of the newly-appointed bishop John Bernard testify: "Therefore, beloved brethren, in all our afflictions and anxieties we shall unite in common supplication, and have recourse, with all the fervor of our hearts, to the Heart of our Divine Redeemer, in order to obtain from this treasury all the riches of divine mercy and grace, and protection for our best and

highest interests. Yes, as difficulties increase about us, and human aid fails us, let us with greater fervor and confidence have recourse to the Heart of Jesus, mindful of our Lord's promise: 'Ask and you shall receive; knock and it shall be opened to you.' 'Whatever you shall ask the Father in My name, that will I do.' " (Pastoral of Sept. 24, 1872.)

The Bishop of Paderborn, Dr. Conrad Martin, the heroic defender of the rights and freedom of the Church, wrote as follows: "Then, in the heavy trials which now afflict the Church, let us respond to the timely invitation addressed us, and have recourse with fullest confidence to the Divine Heart of Jesus, that assured refuge of all afflicted souls, that treasury of divine mercy." (Pastoral of Sept. 24, 1872.)

"Have recourse," exhorts the Archbishop Paul of Cologne, "through this general devotion by means of which so many millions of the faithful are united at one time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament of the altar, have recourse with lively faith and unwavering confidence in God's promises, to the Divine Heart of Jesus pierced for us—to this Heart ever burning with love for God and man—to this Heart which in all necessities

and trials is an ever-open and inexhaustible source of grace, consolation, and relief for all suffering and afflicted souls. Have recourse to this Victim of divine justice and mercy, which as the living centre, the life-source, yea, the very heart of the entire Church, that mystical body of Christ, is united in deepest sympathy and love with all its members." (Pastoral of Sept. 22, 1872.)

The former Bishop of Ermland, who is now Archbishop Philip of Cologne, thus exhorted his flock to the practice of this devotion: "Humbly draw near, full of respect and confidence, to our Lord and Saviour dwelling among us not only through the power and majesty of the Godhead which fills heaven and earth, but also through the life-giving presence of His divine humanity in the Blessed Sacrament. Though established in glory and splendor at the right hand of the Father, He is still with us, hidden in the mystery of His love. In the tabernacle let us honor His adorable Heart which was offered in sacrifice for us on the Mount of Olives and Golgotha, and, pierced in death, shed the last drop of Its blood for us. On the altar, in the perpetual commemoration and unbloody renewal of Its sufferings and

death, It daily offers itself for us to our Heavenly Father. It waits and watches for us, day and night, to be our consolation in affliction, our help in danger, and a safe refuge from all the enemies of our salvation.

“Then, in these dangerous times, let us hide ourselves in this safe stronghold, and place in the adorable Heart of our Redeemer all our needs, anxieties and fears, all our desires and petitions. Let us draw from this source of grace consolation, hope, courage, and strength, zeal for God and His honor, the strength of perseverance, a spirit of sacrifice, and particularly a cheerful willingness to sacrifice for our faith all that is most precious, life itself if God so wills it.” (Pastoral of October 11, 1872.)

The manner in which the faithful responded to this devotion is known to you all. You witnessed the earnestness with which all classes shared in it, you beheld the rapture of their pious hymns, the fervent devotion with which their prayers were offered. But what was effected in the hearts of the faithful is known only to Him, the “searcher of hearts;” to Him who enkindled divine love in these hearts and fitted them for deeds which could only be accomplished

through Him and for Him. The effect of the devotion was also exteriorly manifested ; it was in truth the source of that unwavering firmness which marked the conduct of prelates, of priests, and of the faithful, and of the touching devotion of the Catholic people to their divinely appointed rulers. Therefore we are not mistaken in asserting that it was the inspiration of this Heart burning with love which impelled hundreds, nay, thousands upon thousands, undeterred by great sacrifices and difficulties, to visit their lawful pastors in those times of sore affliction and solemnly renew their vows of love and fidelity. Nothing comparable to their devotion was ever seen or conceived, nor could it be witnessed anywhere save where the hearts of men felt the flame of that consuming furnace of divine love, the adorable Heart of Jesus.

This was apparent even to the enemies of the Church ; so much so that they began to look with suspicion upon the public worship of the Divine Heart of Jesus, even regarded it as evincing more or less hostility to the government, and therefore sought in various ways to oppose it. This seemed to us a striking testimony unwillingly rendered by

our enemies themselves to the power of this elevating devotion.

While the children of the Catholic Church were growing in greater love and fidelity to their common mother, the enemies of the Church were not idle, but redoubled their efforts to sweep it if possible from the face of the earth. The shepherds of the flock again raised their voices to solemnly protest against the injuries inflicted upon the bride of Christ, to brand as false the accusations brought against her, and to instruct the faithful how to bear themselves in these most trying times. Such is the purpose of the ever-memorable pastoral of February, 1874, which closes as follows, with a solemn consecration of the Catholic Church of Prussia to the Divine Heart of Jesus: "*Finally, beloved brethren, and this is our last and most urgent exhortation, let your trust in God never waver, place all your hope in prayer! Have recourse in this present time, when we vainly seek for assistance from the world, to the Divine Heart of your Saviour Who overcame the world, and Who does not forsake us. This Heart is an impregnable fortress, and an ever-open refuge in all our needs. To this Divine Heart overflowing with love and mercy we offer*

and consecrate ourselves, and all the souls confided to our care, for time and eternity."

With this solemn consecration the prelates of the Catholic Church in Prussia crowned their work, responding to the most earnest desire of the Divine Heart of Jesus, and opening to their flocks an unconquerable stronghold and impregnable citadel of refuge.

After we have heard the united utterances of the bishops at various times, it may not be necessary to cite the recommendations and pastorals issued on the subject by individual bishops in the last years, or the devotions and pious practices in honor of the Heart of Jesus, prescribed by them up to the present moment. After what has been said there can be little doubt concerning the opinions and wishes of the divinely appointed prelates. Moreover the time already limited is advancing; so we will pause here to-day and consider the practical conclusion to be drawn from the utterances of the reverend bishops.

The shepherd's voice is the signal to the flock; the father's word is the guide to the children. Devotion to the Divine Heart of Jesus is particularly dear to the hearts of our right reverend bishops. It is the warrant and unmistakable characteristic of the guide.

Therefore this devotion must be equally dear to the hearts of those who recognize in their spiritual superiors a father and guide. We must further conclude that this devotion, which within a short time has progressed so marvellously, which has already obtained so many friends and disciples, is not limited to a portion of the faithful, is not intended, as many erroneously believe, for the devout sex only; no, it is given to all without exception, to men and women, youths and maidens, old age and childhood. In no other way can we reasonably interpret the words and intention of the bishops. It is also a devotion which appeals to all our deepest interests, and should be the watchword of every individual. Therefore they err seriously who for any reason whatever assume that the practice of this devotion does not concern them. They err, because the bishops spoke to all—none were excepted; they err, because the bishops offered and consecrated all without exception to the Divine Heart of Jesus: “To this Divine Heart overflowing with love and mercy we offer and consecrate ourselves, *and all the souls* of the faithful confided to our care, for time and eternity.” Therefore we must further conclude that the objections

and scruples raised against this devotion appear to be not only most doubtful, but even without foundation. For there can be no ground for doubt concerning that which the sentinels or guardians of the faithful commend to all, and which the faithful have so earnestly taken to heart. He, therefore, who glories in being a humble, faithful child of the Catholic Church needs nothing more than the decisions of his divinely appointed guides not only to overcome all objections to this devotion, but to zealously espouse it. Particularly—and this is our final conclusion—particularly as our right reverend bishops recognize, and therefore earnestly recommend it as the most efficacious, I might almost say the only, remedy against the scandals of the times, the unfailing resource in the dangers which threaten us. The shepherds of the flock whom the Holy Spirit has appointed to govern the Church are ever watchful of the dangers which menace us, and in the face of these dangers the paternal voice of the shepherd directs us ever to the Divine Heart of Jesus; hence we must conclude that in the present condition of the times devotion to the Heart of Jesus is, in a measure, of precept, and that it is a remedy

of which all must avail themselves who have the welfare of the church as well as their own interests at heart.

Are these justly-drawn conclusions? I think no one may dispute them. Hence the subject we have chosen for meditation must necessarily appeal to the deepest interests of all, and the most earnest wish of your heart should be to know and practise this devotion, or to learn to appreciate it still better and practise it more zealously.

This then is the task I have set myself in the Lenten sermons of this year. I am moved thereto by a desire to carry out the intentions of the right reverend bishops as perfectly as possible, to meet the needs of the times, to fulfil the expectations of the Divine Heart of Jesus, and render you all a truly Christian service. I am, finally, encouraged, and my confidence and pleasure in the treatment of the subject increased, by the full approval and earnest recommendation of the supreme head of the Catholic Church, the infallible teacher of all revealed truth, the Holy Father at Rome. It is well known how frequently and earnestly Pius IX. recommended devotion to the Divine Heart of Jesus; how he declared that from this source were the Church and society to

look for the remedy of all evils; how he therefore earnestly desired that all the faithful should honor the love of our Lord Jesus Christ in His sufferings, and in the institution of the holy sacrament of the altar under the symbol of His Divine Heart, and daily seek and find their happiness in the commemoration of this wonderful mystery; how he congratulated the disciples of the Divine Heart of Jesus upon finding "the remedy for ail the evils of the times." Not less clearly and earnestly has our Holy Father Leo XIII., gloriously reigning, recommended this devotion to the Catholic world. On November 24, 1879, when he beheld more than five hundred representatives of the Apostleship of Prayer from all parts of Italy assembled before him, he declared devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus to be the most important among the efficacious means of salvation, and gave expression to the most earnest wishes of his heart in the following beautiful words: "We desire with all the fervor of our heart that this excellent devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus should spread and extend throughout the whole earth. For we confidently cherish the consoling hope that great blessings will descend upon us from this

Heart, as efficacious remedies against the evils which oppress the world. The Heart of Jesus is the most perfect model of the most elevating virtues, the inexhaustible source of the richest treasures of heaven." Endeavor, then, beloved sons, to lead men to conform themselves to this Heart, to imitate It, to love It, to make reparation for the offences committed against It, to unite their prayers, their intentions, with Its prayers and intentions, in order to share in their sanctity goodness, and efficacy.

Thus we are constrained by the common Father of the faithful, by our highest prelates, by the very condition of the times, to love and honor the Divine Heart of Jesus. It is also God's will. Yes, God wills that we honor the Heart of His Son with filial devotion. Let us follow, then, the clearly manifest will of God, and the inestimable treasure of the riches of the Divine Heart will be opened to us, and our hearts also will burn with that love which Jesus came on earth to kindle: "I am come to cast fire on earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?" Amen.

SECOND SERMON.

History of Devotion to the Sacred Heart
of Jesus.

“I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?”—*Luke* xii. 49.

DEVOTION to the Divine Heart of Jesus has become the favorite devotion of the people. Innumerable is the multitude who find in the Sacred Heart of Jesus help, consolation, and deliverance. The Catholic portion of the earth testifies that the most brilliant and beautiful fruits grow in the garden of this Divine Heart of Jesus. The circle of its disciples is spreading wider and wider. The divinely appointed shepherds of the flock, the faithful guardians of the depository of the treasures of faith, so far from opposing this devotion, piously and zealously vie with one another in promoting it. They embrace every opportunity of zealously inculcating and fervently stimulating it in the souls confided to their care. The supreme guardian of the faithful, the infallible teacher of revealed truth, the vicegerent

of God upon earth, has repeatedly and most earnestly recommended it.

All these facts we established in the former meditation with irrefutable evidence, and from them the following brief conclusions followed: That devotion to the Divine Heart of Jesus is a devotion approved by the Church, a devotion to be recommended to all, a devotion that without doubt is elevating, a devotion that appeals to the deepest interests of every Christian, a devotion, finally, that, particularly at the present moment, merits to be inculcated as much as possible, as the guardians of the faithful extol and recommend it as a safe preservative against the great evils and dangers of the day. This is very evident on glancing over the practical exercises of this devotion. Meanwhile, may the discussion upon which we are entering afford some points which may lead to a clear understanding of the devotion and awaken for it a deeper interest and love. Therefore, to-day we will answer the question which naturally suggests itself to all of you: *How did the worship of the Divine Heart of Jesus arise?* or, *What is the history of devotion to this Divine Heart?* May the Sacred Heart grant us

light and grace to answer this question in His Spirit.

The worship of the Divine Heart of Jesus is as old as Christianity itself. It began with the great sacrifice on Golgotha, when this Divine Heart, pierced with a lance, became a place of refuge for all the faithful. The love of this Divine Heart burned in the hearts of those who bore Jesus in their hearts; it burned in the heart of him who was privileged to rest on the Heart of Jesus at the Last Supper, and who therefore cries out with holy inspiration, God is love!—uniting in that one word all the divine perfections. This love burned in the heart of the great Apostle who so frequently speaks of the great love of Jesus Christ, and who, glowing with this love, solemnly affirms that nothing shall separate him from the love of Jesus Christ. This love burned in the hearts of millions of holy martyrs who joyfully laid down their lives for Him who died for love of them. It was enkindled in all that ancient Gentile world that willingly abandoned their idols to hasten to this Heart raised by love to the height of the cross. Devotion to the Divine Heart of Jesus has been at all times the favorite devotion of souls beloved by

God, a devotion extolled and praised by the greatest saints and doctors of the early ages. "Longinus," writes St. Augustine, "pierced the side of Jesus with a lance, and His heart was opened: there will I enter and take my rest." "Oh, how good and pleasant it is," says the honey-tongued St. Bernard, "to dwell in the Heart of Jesus! Oh, what a rich treasure is this Heart, what a precious pearl! Willingly would I sacrifice all I have to possess It. In this Temple, in this Sanctuary, before this Ark of the Covenant, will I adore and praise the name of the Lord, and exclaim with the prophet, I have found the Heart of my King, my Brother, my Friend." Beloved brethren, does it not seem as if we were listening to the words of some of the present most devoted disciples of the Heart of Jesus? "Behold the gate of paradise is open," exclaims the seraphic Doctor St. Bonaventure; "the sword that guarded the entrance has fallen before the soldier's lance that opened to us the treasury of eternal wisdom and love; enter It, then, through the holy wound of the side." "Who," exclaims the gentle St. Francis de Sales, "will not love this royal Heart so full of mercy for us?" And the great preacher of

penance, St. Peter Damian, gives us the following consoling assurance: "In this adorable Heart we find arms with which to defend ourselves against the enemy, medicine to heal our wounds, powerful help against temptation, the sweetest consolation in our sufferings, and the purest joys in this valley of tears."

Thus have the great saints of the Church spoken of the Divine Heart of Jesus, and their words find an echo in innumerable hearts. What shall I say of the sublime praise of the Sacred Heart uttered by St. Catherine, of the tender devotion and heavenly ways of divine love which the holy religious Gertrude and Mechtilde, St. Clare, St. Teresa, a Lidwina, an Armilla, learned from the Divine Heart of Jesus? I shall content myself with quoting the beautiful words of Count Eleazer to his wife: "I have taken up my abode in the Heart of Jesus; when you desire to find me, seek me in the side of my Saviour."

Thus we see that at all times since Christianity existed there have been souls lovingly devoted to the Divine Heart of Jesus, souls that burned with the fire of divine love which our Saviour came on earth to kindle.

In this sense the veneration of the Divine Heart is as old as Christianity itself. The solemn and public worship of the Divine Heart of Jesus is of more recent time. It was in the seventeenth century that it was signally revealed as a special proof of God's love. The instrument chosen by God in this as in so many other instances was humble and obscure. She was a simple religious whose name the Catholic world now utters with holy joy and heart-felt gratitude, BLESSED MARGARET MARY ALACOCQUE, of the Visitation of Paray-le-Monial in France. To this holy virgin our Saviour revealed His Divine Heart on several occasions.

The first time Jesus appeared to His holy servant she was in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. He showed her His Sacred Heart in His open Breast, encircled with fire and flames, and uttered these significant words: "My Divine Heart is so full of love for men that, being unable to contain within Itself the flames of Its burning charity, It must needs spread them abroad through thy means, and manifest Itself to men to enrich them with the treasures It contains. I discover to thee the price of these treasures; they contain the graces of sanctification and

salvation necessary to draw men from the abyss of perdition. I have chosen thee, notwithstanding thy unworthiness and ignorance, for the accomplishment of this design, in order that it may be clearly evident that all is done by Me." These were the first words uttered by our Saviour concerning the public worship of His Divine Heart—words prompted by divine love; words giving new proof of divine benevolence; words powerfully exhorting us to love God, and almost paraphrasing these words of our Intercessor: "I am come to cast fire upon the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?" Thus this revelation appeared as a new impetus, if I may so speak, from the side of our Saviour to awaken His love in the hearts of men.

Yes, this was the only object our Saviour longed and aimed to attain. When he appeared again to the pious religious on the feast of St. John the Evangelist, He showed her His Heart as on a throne of fire and flames, shedding on every side rays brighter than the sun and transparent crystal, and encircled by a crown of thorns and surmounted by a cross. Our Saviour Himself deigned to explain to her that these instruments of His Passion sig-

nified all that He had suffered purely for love of men; that it was the earnest desire to be loved by men that had prompted Him to reveal His Heart to them, to open to them this treasure of love and mercy, of grace and sanctification, and of all perfection, in order that all who worthily honored and loved this Heart might share in the infinite riches which It contained.

On June 16, 1675, He revealed to her that He desired to have a special feast established in honor of His Divine Heart. The holy servant wrote the following account of this revelation to her director: "As I was kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament one day during the Octave of Corpus Christi, I received from my God extraordinary graces of His love. I felt in my heart an ardent desire to make Him some return for His great goodness, and to render Him love for love. Then He said: 'You cannot better testify your love for Me than by doing what I have so often desired of you.' Thereupon He discovered His Divine Heart to me, saying: 'Behold this Heart which has loved men so much that It has spared nothing, even to exhausting and consuming Itself, in order to testify Its love to them; and in return I re-

ceive from the greater portion only ingratitude, through the contempt, irreverences, ac-rilege, and coldness with which they treat Me in this Sacrament of Love. But what grieves Me still more is that even souls consecrated to Me should treat Me thus. For this reason I ask of thee that the first Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi be set apart as a special feast consecrated to the honor of My Heart.'” Our Lord then goes on to explain to His servant how He would have this day observed, and the honor He desired should be rendered to the Divine Heart of Jesus: “On this day the faithful shall receive Holy Communion, and a solemn act of reparation shall be offered for the indignities My Divine Heart receives during the time It is exposed on My altars. I promise thee that My Heart shall be opened to shed in richest abundance the influence of Its divine love upon all who shall render It this honor or endeavor to have it rendered.”

Here we have a brief exposition of the institution of the public worship of the Divine Heart of Jesus. We see that its founder was no other than our Saviour Himself; no less a power than the Lord of heaven and earth earnestly asked it; the Eternal Wisdom Itself

prescribed the manner in which the devotion was to be practised.

But who vouches for the truth of these declarations? Who guarantees the correctness of these affirmations? You are right, beloved brethren, to ask these questions, which I hope, however, to answer in a manner which will remove all your doubts. Consider first of all the position of Blessed Margaret Mary. She is a poor religious, cut off from all intercourse with the world, hidden and unknown, even without influence in her order; yet she is the instrument chosen for the establishment of a devotion which stirred the world, the foremost herald of a devotion which men contested with violence as well as with spiritual arms. The words of the Apostle involuntarily recur to us: "The foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the wise; and the weak things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the strong; and the base things of the world, and the things that are contemptible, hath God chosen, and things that are not, that He might bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His sight" (1 Corin. i 27, 28, 29). The holy servant of God was fully conscious of her impotence, and

begged our Saviour to have mercy on her weakness. "But to whom, O Lord," she cried, "dost Thou address Thyself? To a poor creature, and so wretched a sinner that her unworthiness is capable of hindering Thy design." But He answered: "Dost thou not know that I use the weakest instruments to confound the strong, and that it is in the lowly and poor in spirit that My power is most brilliantly manifested? Fear nothing: I will be thy strength." And He gave her at the same time the consoling assurance that He would prevail over all who were against His design. The first one chosen by our Saviour Himself to assist His holy servant in the accomplishment of her divine mission was Father Peter Claudius de la Colombière of the Society of Jesus, whose name the great Benedict XIV. declared would be celebrated throughout the world through the preaching of the Gospel. The holy apostle devoted himself to the furtherance of the divine work by his words and his writings.

It would take us too far if I were to relate all that Father de la Columbière and other clear-sighted men did for this devotion. They were convinced after mature examination that it was prescribed by God Himself,

and therefore earnestly devoted themselves to accomplishing the clearly manifest will of God by inculcating it in well-disposed souls, to thus defend them against the enemies that were gradually springing up about them. The Church, the guardian of the treasures of the faith, could not look with indifference upon the ever-increasing spread of this devotion. The Holy See, after submitting the devotion itself, the truth of the revelations, and in short everything relating to it, to the severest examination, issued its apostolic sanction, and thus imprinted upon it the divine seal of infallible truth. No less than eleven popes have earnestly recommended the worship of the Divine Heart of Jesus, and taken upon themselves the mission of promoting it to the best of their power. To this end they have vied with one another in generously opening the treasury of the inexhaustible merits of Jesus Christ and His saints, and, by means of rich indulgences, in earnestly exciting the faithful to the practice of the devotion.

The devotion then flowed by means of faithful hearts like a powerful stream throughout the Catholic world. Not only Europe but Asia and America were happy to rest in

the Heart of their Saviour. The Divine Heart of Jesus seems within forty years to have gained a complete victory over the hearts of men.

But this happy result could not be effected without exciting the mighty wrath of a powerful enemy. The lying spirit of evil, deeply enraged, employed every means and made every effort to assert his sovereignty over the hearts of men; he already saw the great riches of grace and mercy which would flow to mankind through this devotion when it should be universally known. Therefore he armed himself for battle, and resolved that the work of grace must be destroyed. He sought confederates in his unholy work, and soon found them in a sect which under the cloak of penance and austerity were perpetrating unutterable evils. This was icy-hearted Jansenism, which could not bear the burning rays of the Divine Heart of Jesus; the very nature of its existence being to reject all that is consoling and elevating in our holy faith. These heretics, impelled by Satan, stopped at nothing to effect their purpose. In a series of abominable and slanderous writings they did not shrink from representing this august devotion as superstitious, absurd, and ridiculous, even as

positively impious. Kings, princes, bishops, priests, doctors of theology, laymen, all classes were drawn into this execrable league; Jansenists, Gallican parliamentarians, the followers of Joseph II. in Germany, of Leopold in Tuscany, revolutionists, and the convents in Paris united against the worship of the Heart of Jesus.

But a joyous Easter followed the Passion Week of the Divine Heart. When Its enemies seemed to have reached the height of their power, and deemed they had crowned their diabolical work with the decree of the Synod of Pistoja, Pius VI. rose in his apostolic strength, and with the power of his papal word stilled the storm which was raging against the holiest, noblest, and most sanctifying devotion, by solemnly condemning the impious and false asseverations representing the devotion to the Divine Heart of Jesus as erroneous and dangerous.

The devotion started with new vigor; but its progress, alas! was soon destroyed, not because of the efforts of new enemies against it, but because of the spirit of tepidity and indifference which had crept into the hearts of men. And so our devotion remained without opposition, but also without awakening

any correspondence in the people. This continued until our day. It was reserved to the glorious pontificate of Pius IX. to effect and to witness the great rise of this devotion. It was Pius IX., whose jubilee of June 16th, 1871, fell upon the feast of the Sacred Heart, who appointed the feast of the Divine Heart to be celebrated throughout the entire Church, and enjoined all priests to consecrate the first Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi to this devotion, and to celebrate Mass in honor of the Sacred Heart on that day (decree of August 20, 1856). It was Pius IX. who raised Blessed Margaret to our altars (1864). It was Pius IX. who efficaciously promoted the practices and associations in honor of the Sacred Heart, earnestly commending them to the faithful by means of rich indulgences. We are not surprised, therefore, that, fostered by the tender care of God's vicegerent upon earth, the noblest blossoms and fruits grow in the garden of the Divine Heart of Jesus; that the apostleship of prayer, the communion of reparation, the devotion of the nine Fridays, the devout observance of the first Friday of each month, the special devotion of the Month of the

Sacred Heart, and other pious practices in honor of the Divine Heart gloriously flourish; that there is no longer a Catholic country in the world which does not contain innumerable disciples of the Heart of Jesus; that priests vie with one another in recommending this sublime devotion to the people, by their words as well as by their writings; that, in a word, the devotion to the Sacred Heart has become the devotion of the world.

Yes, the Heart of Jesus daily celebrates, to the joy of the good and the confusion of the wicked, new triumphs in the hearts of men. Innumerable parishes, dioceses, religious orders, and even several countries had been publicly and solemnly consecrated to the Divine Heart; it only remained to solemnly consecrate the entire Church. As early as 1870, several prelates had laid the question before the Holy Father at the General Council; but the Council adjourned before it was reached. In 1874 a petition signed by no less than one hundred and sixty ecclesiastics and three million of the faithful was addressed to the Holy Father, and closed with these words: "Consecrate, we beg you, consecrate the Church to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This impregnable refuge will be the

haven in which the bark of Peter will find rest." When Pius IX. received the petition on January 1, 1875, he exclaimed with astonishment, "Three millions! that is an army! I will place myself at the head of these three millions, and we will conquer the world." And the glorious pontiff who crowned devotion to the Blessed Virgin by proclaiming the dogma of her immaculate conception, and devotion to St. Joseph by raising him to the rank of patron of the universal Church, crowned this august devotion by consecrating the entire Church to the adorable Heart of Jesus. At the celebration of the second centenary of the devotion, June 16, 1875, he permitted the consecration to be confirmed by a special formula.

Thus the desires and hopes of even the most zealous and fervent adorers of the Heart of Jesus are now fulfilled. No devotion has received stronger ecclesiastical sanction, or been more earnestly recommended and promoted by the Holy See. It has become the favorite devotion of the faithful. Twenty-two "Messengers of the Sacred Heart" publish in almost as many tongues the boundless treasures of this Divine Heart, and bear throughout the world the innumerable bless-

ings and graces with which the devotion and the confidence of the faithful are so richly rewarded. True, opposing voices are not yet completely silenced, but they are hardly to be feared, for the wind cannot extinguish a blazing fire, but, on the contrary, must increase its ardor and send its flames higher. Yes, devotion to the Heart of Jesus has seized the hearts of men, and we are firmly convinced that the enemies of salvation, so far from extinguishing the burning flames of this love, only kindle them more fervidly and spread them further.

I have briefly set before you the history of devotion to the Divine Heart of Jesus from its beginning to the present time; a history which clearly and indisputably demonstrates the ruling of divine power; a history the starting-point of which is Jesus, and which in all things refers to Jesus; a history which stands as a new and more striking proof that a seed sown by the hand of God springs up, and thrives and gradually becomes a mighty tree, whose top reaches the clouds, and whose branches shelter the world. Judge for yourselves, then, how a faithful Catholic should hold devotion to the Sacred Heart; judge for yourselves what a zealous Catholic

has to do; judge for yourselves whether it be not meet and just that we consecrate ourselves with all the fervor and love of our hearts to this Heart overflowing with love and mercy, that we confidently expect all blessings from this source of all graces. Yes, beloved brethren, the Heart of Jesus wills to be honored and loved by men. It wills to be loved and honored by all. It wills to be loved and honored by each one of us. Then let us joyfully fulfil this divine will, and we shall find an exceeding great reward in this Divine Heart. "Taste and see that the Lord is sweet; blessed is the man that hopeth in Him." Amen.



THIRD SERMON.

Object and End of Devotion to the Sacred Heart.

“ I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled ?”—*Luke* xii. 49.

THE Divine Heart of Jesus has always been an object of worship in the Church.

There have always been hearts penetrated and filled with the flame of divine love which Jesus came on earth to kindle. There have always been souls who have most earnestly desired and striven to make ever greater return of love for this infinite Love, who have zealously striven to make reparation to this Love too little known. But this did not satisfy our Redeemer and zealous Lover of souls. He desired to be loved by all men, that He might abundantly shed upon them the treasures of His infinite love. Therefore, in the seventeenth century, He revealed His Heart burning with love, and deigned Himself to establish the public worship of His Divine Heart. Unimportant as the devotion at first appeared, it soon gave evidence of

the divine power dwelling in it: triumphantly penetrating the icy crust which bound the hearts of men, triumphantly withstanding the war waged against it by human pride and diabolic malice, triumphantly spreading the more rapidly as enemies rose against it. And so it became, thanks to the zealous servants appointed to establish it in the world, a general source of blessing to Catholic Christianity. It is now, we can confidently assert, the favorite devotion of the Catholic world, recommended and promoted by the shepherds of the fold, and it shows, particularly at the present time, that it is appointed to remedy great evils, to avert the dangers which threaten us, and to restore peace and rest to the Church and human society. Therefore, all not blinded by prejudice cannot but regard this devotion as the work of God. It preserves its divine origin, the same divine power dwells in it. The watchword, God wills it! which spurred the crusaders to the rescue of the holy land, resounds in our day, and is no less ours. God wills it! God wills it! Yes, God wills that we honor the Sacred Heart of His Son. God wills by means of this filial and zealous worship to free the Church from the yoke of

slavery which has been unjustly imposed upon her; God wills that through this devotion we rescue our own souls and the souls of many others from the brink of destruction, and enrich them with heavenly treasures. This I hope is the firm conviction of all who have carefully followed our former instructions.

We may therefore proceed a step further to-day, and draw nearer to the devotion itself. Two questions are here at once suggested, to which each of my hearers expects a clear and explicit answer: What is the special object of this devotion? What is its chief end? May the Divine Heart of Jesus grant us light and strength to answer both these questions according to His spirit and for the good of souls.

I. What is the special object of devotion to the Divine Heart of Jesus? Many may at first be astonished to hear this question generally proposed, the answer being so clearly expressed in the name itself which the devotion bears. Nevertheless, a further exposition or explanation may be necessary, as much for the better understanding of the august devotion as to remove misapprehensions concerning it.

Devotions in honor of the humanity of Christ always have, like the feasts, a double object. One is spiritual, and consequently does not fall under the senses; the other is corporal, and therefore apprehensible to the senses. From the latter the devotion takes its name. An example will illustrate my meaning: In the old and well-known devotion to the Five Wounds, the spiritual object is the suffering and love of the Man-God revealed through these Wounds. The corporal or visible object is the sacred Wounds themselves which Christ received for us, and from which the devotion takes its name.

Apply this now to our devotion. Its special object is the Divine Heart of our Saviour—that Heart which, pierced by the soldier's lance, poured the last drop of its expiating blood upon this earth; that Heart that beat so truly with love for us during the three-and-thirty years of our Saviour's earthly pilgrimage; that Heart that still beats with love for us; that Heart which, freed from suffering evermore, is enthroned in the highest heaven; that Heart which is ever living and truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar. It is the Heart of the God-Man, therefore a divine and adorable

Heart. It is the Heart of our Good Shepherd, and therefore a self-sacrificing and most merciful Heart. It is the Heart of the Spouse of our soul, therefore a Heart worthy of all love. It is the Heart which our Saviour revealed with the words: "Behold this Heart which has loved men so much!"

Is it meet, then, beloved brethren, that we make this Heart the object of special worship? Who may deny that it is meet and just and salutary? The heart is considered the noblest part of the human body; so the Heart of Jesus is the noblest part of the Divine Humanity, and therefore is worthy of special worship. If the heart is the centre of the circulation of the blood, and therefore intimately connected with the life and growth of the body, how intimately is the Heart of the Man-God connected with the divine life of our Saviour,—with the great sacrifice which He offered for us! Yes, here is the source of that expiating blood which effaced the sins of the world. This Heart of our Saviour was most intimately united with the noblest soul, and participated in the great love and sacrifice of the soul of the incarnate God. If the world honors with grateful remembrance the heart of a great man, regard-

ing it as the dwelling of a great soul, the seat of the noblest feelings, how much greater reason have we to honor the heart of Him who is the "First-born among many brethren!" All salvation and deliverance have been wrought through this immaculate Heart resplendent with all the virtues of infinite perfection. This Heart that we venerate is intimately and inseparably united with the Divinity, with the person of the Divine Word. Therefore it is truly the Heart of our God, whose smallest action is of infinite worth. So is it consequently a divine living and beloved Heart, a Heart not only holy through the sanctity of a noble soul, but holy with the sanctity of the Word which is sanctity itself. Again I ask, Is it meet and just that we render special honor to this Heart?

But our devotion must not stop here. If the Heart of the Man-God considered in Itself is worthy to be honored and adored, It seems still more worthy of love, when we contemplate It as the symbol, the organ, the depository of divine love that love which, likened to burning flames, is the grace-giving Sun in the firmament of the Church; that love which embraces Creator and creature, time and eternity. Oh! that it were given me to

worthily speak of this divine love! Jesus has loved us from all eternity: "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love" (Jer. xxxi. 3). He has loved us with a divine love, and therefore with that tenderness which Jesus Himself explains in touching parables; He has loved us with the strongest love, the flames of which floods of suffering could not extinguish. He has loved us with the most generous and unselfish love, which, not satisfied with giving all that it had gave Itself. Hence St. Augustine exclaims with astonishment: "My God, how prodigal art Thou of Thyself!" He loves us with a constant love, as the Father loves Him: "As the Father hath loved Me, I also have loved you" (John xv. 9). This boundless love which neither angels nor men may worthily praise is revealed to us in the Sacred Heart of Jesus. To this does the Church direct us in placing the Heart of Jesus before us as the object of our worship.

Behold then beloved brethren, the object of our devotion, the corporal as well as spiritual, the visible as well as invisible. Once more, to briefly state it: We honor the Heart of Jesus pierced with a lance and burning with love. Thus are we taught by our Divine

Saviour Himself, who at various times revealed His wounded Heart to Blessed Margaret Mary, and discovered to her the boundless love with which His Heart was so inflamed that He had spared nothing, and had been exhausted and consumed to testify this love for men. Our Divine Redeemer wished that this Heart glowing with love should be honored and loved in return by men. Thus are we taught by the prelates and infallible teachers of the Church. For in the decree of beatification of the servant of the Sacred Heart we read: "Jesus Christ, the Founder and Finisher of our faith, who in the excess of His love took upon Himself the weakness of human nature, and offered Himself to God a spotless holocaust on the altar of the cross to free us from the ignominious slavery of sin, desires nothing more earnestly than that this love which burns in His Heart be powerfully enkindled in the hearts of men, as we learn from these words in the gospel to His disciples: 'I am come to cast fire upon the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?' That this fire of love may be more and more enkindled He wills that the devotion to His Sacred Heart be established and propagated throughout the Church. Where, then, is the

heart so hard and insensible that it does not feel moved to make a return of love to this adorable Heart which was wounded and pierced with a lance to open to our souls a place of rest, and secure refuge to which we may retire and find protection against the attacks and snares of the enemy?" (Pius IX.)

When our Saviour revealed His pierced Heart to Blessed Margaret Mary, and through her to all the faithful and to every Christian in particular, when he earnestly asked that It be worshipped and honored, it was not as carnal men have thought and asserted, it was not as separated from the body, it was not as separated from the Divinity: it was His living Heart, that as the Heart of the Man-God merits all honor and worship; it was the Heart of the living Son of God, that not only represented and symbolized the love of Jesus Christ, but intimately participated in all His loving designs, and therefore merited to be specially loved and honored.

Thus when the Church places the Heart of Jesus before you, she says to you, in the words of the Saviour: "Behold this Divine Heart, which is so full of love for men that It can no longer contain within Itself the burning flames

of Its charity ;" she shows you this Heart as the veritable seat of the blood which redeemed the world, as the burning focus centring life and all its mysteries, influencing with this united fervor the souls of men ; she shows you, in the words of St. Bernard, " this glowing furnace of love which inflames and consumes the world." Thus we find in the Divine Heart of Jesus, to use the words of the Apostle, the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of Jesus Christ. We find the love which embraces all places and all times ; the love from which no man is excluded, but which is poured out upon all, upon sinners as well as the just ; the love which raises our poor humanity to a participation in the divine nature (2 Peter i. 4) ; that love which moved the Son of God to debase Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men (Phil. ii. 7).

Tell me, beloved brethren, if there be an object more worthy of worship, an object better fitted to awaken a return of love ?

II. After our former instruction, the second question concerning the special end of the devotion to the Divine Heart of Jesus is easily settled. For to what end did our Divine Saviour reveal His boundless love but to obtain

love, a return of love? This is the first and chief end for which this devotion was instituted. St. Bernard, that fervent disciple of the Sacred Heart, had already said, in contemplating the boundless love of Jesus: "Who will not love this wounded Heart? who will not love in return One who has loved us so much? who would not be clasped in the arms of One so chaste and pure? Yes, let us love Him with all our strength while we are in the flesh, let us make Him a return of love; let us clasp Him to our hearts, Him Who was wounded for us, Whose hands and feet, Whose side and Heart were pierced by impious executioners; let us constantly hope that He will bind our hard and unrepentant hearts to Him with chains of love, and pierce them with the arrows of love." Thus it is love, a fervent return of love, that our Saviour wills and expects from men through the revelation of His Divine Heart. Hear His own words: "Behold," He said to His servant, "this Heart which has loved men so much that It has spared nothing, even to exhausting and consuming Itself, in order to testify Its love to them." "I have a burning thirst to be honored by men in the Blessed Sacrament, and I find but few who endeavor according to

My desire to allay this thirst by making † & some return." "If they made Me a return, all that I have done for them would appear but little to My love. But they feel only coldness for Me, and they only return My advances by rejecting Me."

Thus the revelation of the Heart of Jesus inflamed with love stands as a new attempt, so to speak; a new effort on the part of our Saviour to win the hearts of men, to enkindle in them a return of love. It is a striking proof that the desire expressed in these words, "I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?" still glows in the Heart of our Saviour. This is abundantly confirmed by our Lord's words to Blessed Margaret Mary: "It was the great desire to be perfectly loved by men that caused Me to form the design of revealing My heart to them, and of giving them in these latter times this last effort of My love, by proposing to them an object and a means so calculated to engage them to love Me and to love Me faithfully." Blessed Margaret Mary once heard the choir of Seraphim singing: "Love triumphs, love delights in God." The same canticle must resound

throughout the world. This is the next end of our devotion.

Love glowing in a heart impels and constrains it to offer reparation for love despised and rejected. What return does the boundless love of God receive for all the benefits it has so abundantly bestowed and still bestows upon men? Ingratitude, the deepest, the blackest ingratitude. Rather are not all the proofs of love with which, according to the Church, the Heart of Jesus recalls Itself to us only so many occasions of ingratitude on the part of men? Love moved God to create the world and all that is in it for man,—and man uses it all to offend His Creator. Love moved the Only-begotten of the eternal Father to assume a human nature,—and man disregards the humiliation of His God: it is frequently a stumbling-block to him. Love induced God to suffer and die for us,—and man actually mocks His crucified Saviour and continually studies how he can renew His sufferings. Love moved the Divine Heart of Jesus to invent the great mystery of love, the adorable Sacrament of the Altar,—and where is this love so sensibly offended as in this very marvel of love? What does Jesus receive from the greater part of mankind but

ingratitude, coldness, sacrilege? Hence His loving plaint: "If they made Me a return, all that I have done for them would appear but little to My love. But they entertain only coldness for Me, and they only return My advances by rejecting Me." Hence His closing petition to His servant: "Do Thou at least console Me by supplying for their ingratitude as far as thou art able."

This, then, is the second end of our devotion, which is, however, included in the first. For how can a loving Heart contemplate the abyss of divine love on one side and the abyss of man's ingratitude on the other without feeling impelled to offer this despised love all the reparation in its power? This is what Jesus desires; it is what He yearns for from all men; it is what He yearns to receive from each one of us. Then contemplate this Heart glowing with love; see how It loves you; see how It also expects reparation from you. And when you clearly understand what Jesus became for you, then consider what you can be for Jesus, to what you must most zealously aspire; for He has promised to the zealous disciples of His Sacred Heart the richest fulness of divine blessings.

To conclude, then: divine is the origin,

divine is the spread of our devotion; divine is its object, divine is its end. Cultivate it, practise it, then, to the best of your power, that you also may become divine—that is, as the Apostle tells us, “partakers of the divine nature.” “He that abideth in love abideth in God, and God in him.” Amen.



FOURTH SERMON.

The Blessings of Devotion to the Heart of Jesus.

“Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you.”—*Matt.* xi. 28.

LOVE is not loved! This was the constant, ever-recurring complaint of the seraphic St. Francis. Love is not loved! This is at all times the complaint of our Divine Redeemer in presence of the ingratitude of men—a complaint which the Psalmist already placed in His mouth: “I looked for one that would grieve together with me, but there was none: for one that would comfort me, and I found none” (*Ps.* lxxviii. 21); a complaint uttered by our dying Saviour on the cross: “I thirst!”* I thirst for loving souls. Love is not loved! This is apparent to any one who observes, however superficially, the ways and deeds of men; for their lack of grateful love is so manifest that it often seems as if they vied with one an-

* *John* xix. 28.

other in avoiding every appearance of gratitude. Love is not loved! The truth of this sad complaint moved the infinite love of God to make a new effort to awaken a return of love in the hearts of men. The great desire to be perfectly loved by men caused our Saviour to disclose His heart to them, thus setting before them an object and a means most fitting to excite them to love Him, to win from them a fervent return of love. We have already on former Sundays spoken of this object and these means: the pierced Heart of our Saviour Jesus Christ; that Heart united to the Godhead, that Heart the well-beloved of the Heavenly Father, the temple of the Holy Ghost, the paradise of divine bliss; that Heart the treasury of all the riches of God, the burning source of divine love, the ardently desired and sweetest happiness of all the saints. There is nothing alarming, nothing severe, nothing that suggests God's avenging justice here; there is nothing but love, extravagant love, plaintive, appealing love that desires only a return of love. What answer shall we give when the voice of our God resounds so clearly in our ears? Our Divine Redeemer saw in His omniscience that even this new

and signal revelation of His boundless love would not suffice to awaken a lasting and universal return of love in men, and therefore revealed at the same time with His Heart burning with love, the richest source of divine mercies. And this brings us to-day to a further point which demonstrates in the most palpable manner the divine nature of our devotion; divine, as we have already shown, in its origin, divine in its object, divine in its end, *divine in its blessings*. May the Divine Heart of our Redeemer grant us words to worthily speak of these blessings.

“Think of the Lord in goodness!” admonishes the Holy Ghost at the beginning of the Book of Wisdom. “Think of the Lord in goodness!” admonishes the whole creation issued from the hands of the Lord and preserved by the goodness of the Lord. “Think of the Lord in goodness!” admonishes the great work of the Redemption, the greatest proof of God’s boundless love: “God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son; that, whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting” (John iii. 16). “Think of the Lord in goodness!” admonishes the work of sanctification, through which we poor worms of the earth

are made partakers of the divine nature, esteemed worthy to be the living temples of the Divinity, and to one day possess the Trinity itself in the eternal temple of the Godhead. "Think of the Lord in goodness!" admonishes the generous love of God, Who, though He needs not our love and service, rewards it as richly, as tenderly, yes, I might almost say as extravagantly as if it were a stringent necessity. Does not our Divine Saviour assure us that as the care of His Heavenly Father extends to all even to the least among us, so also in His fatherly goodness He rewards even a glass of cold water given for love of Him (Matt. x. 42)? "Think of the Lord in goodness," earnestly and touchingly exhorts the Divine Heart of our Saviour; that Heart that was consumed with love for us, that Heart that burns with desire for our love, in order to reward our return of love with the richest blessings for body and soul, for time and eternity. Yes, I am not going too far, I am not speaking rashly, when I assert that our devotion is unqualifiedly to be numbered among the most richly blest of all devotions.

Upon what do I ground this assertion? Upon the promises of our Divine Saviour,

Who, deigning Himself to introduce this devotion in the world, commended it with the richest promises. At His first appearance to Blessed Margaret Mary He said: "My Divine Heart is so full of love for men, and for thee in particular, that, being unable to contain within Itself the flames of Its burning charity, It must needs spread them abroad through thee, and manifest Itself to men to *enrich them with the treasures It contains*. To all intelligent minds and clear-seeing eyes these words indicate something great, something extraordinary. Our Saviour is no longer satisfied to bestow ordinary graces; no, it is a new, rich, overflowing fountain of grace He wills to reveal, a source from which grace does not flow drop by drop, but is poured in rich streams into the Hearts of men. This is clearly the meaning of this first revelation, the interpretation which all my hearers will give with me, and which is still more evident in a later revelation. "*I promise thee*," said our Saviour on another occasion to Blessed Margaret Mary, "*that my Heart shall be opened to shed the effects of Its divine love abundantly upon all who shall render It this honor, or who shall endeavor to have it rendered*." Here our Saviour promises in His

own words the richest effects of His love to all who will celebrate according to His will the feast of the Sacred Heart.

And again our Saviour said: "It was the great desire I had to be loved by men that made Me form the design of disclosing My heart to them, and of *giving them in these latter times this last effort of My love*, by proposing to them an object and a means so calculated to engage them to love Me, and to love Me faithfully." And later He assures His holy servant: "In giving My Heart to them I open to them all *Its treasures of love, of mercy, of grace, of sanctification, and of salvation*, in order that all who desire to love and honor It, or cause It to be loved and honored, may be abundantly enriched with the divine treasures of which It is the fruitful and inexhaustible source." Nothing could be clearer than the words just quoted, and in them we find an invincible proof of the truth of our assertion that the devotion to the Sacred Heart is to be numbered among the most richly blest of all devotions.

But our Lord did not stop at these general promises; He was not satisfied to make them only to His servant; He wished that this revelation of love should be a source of univer-

sal blessing, individually tasted and experienced by all who, according to His will, honor and love His Sacred Heart. "Publish and cause it to be published throughout the world," He says, "that there shall be no limit or bounds to My love in the bestowal of favors upon those who seek graces from My Heart." And now let us pass over the promises made to religious and to priests laboring for the salvation to souls, to point out only those made to people of the world. Listen to them, beloved brethren, engrave them deeply in your hearts, and may they stimulate you more powerfully, and guide you more confidently to devotion to the Divine Heart of Jesus. "Persons living in the world will find in this devotion all the *assistance necessary for their state in life*: peace in their families, relief in their toils, the blessing of Heaven upon all their undertakings, and consolation in all their troubles. In this adorable Heart they will find a secure place of refuge during life, and more especially at the hour of death."

Need we be astonished, after such promises, that Blessed Margaret Mary so solemnly asserts: "I do not know that there is any practice of devotion in the spiritual life more *calculated to raise a soul in a short time to the highest*

perfection, and to make it relish the true sweetness which is to be found in the service of Jesus Christ"? Need we wonder that she affirms: "There is no one who would not experience every kind of help from Heaven if he had such a grateful love for Jesus Christ as is contained in devotion to His Sacred Heart"? Need we, finally, be astonished that she exclaims: "I say with confidence that if we only knew how pleasing this devotion is to Jesus Christ, there is not a Christian, however poor His love for our dear Lord who would not at once adopt its practice"? After such promises we can understand the holy servant's fervent lament: "Why can I not recount all that I know concerning this admirable devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and reveal to the whole world the treasures of grace which Jesus Christ has stored in His adorable Heart, and which He designs to bestow in abundance upon all who will honor It?"

Let us pause for a moment to grasp more clearly the meaning of these magnificent promises. By whom are they given? By Jesus Christ Himself, the Founder of this devotion,—by the Author of all truth, who can neither deceive nor be deceived,—this bounteous Creator of all things, whose happiness

is to bestow blessings,—Who rejoices that we offer Him an opportunity to bless us; finally, it is the King of the universe, Whose royal word is repeatedly and solemnly pledged.

This is guaranteed by the authority of the Church, who, after the strictest examination of the writings of Blessed Margaret Mary, raised no objection, but, on the contrary, has promoted, and continues earnestly to promote, the devotion revealed through her—of the Church who has raised this first disciple of the Sacred Heart to the honors of the altar, thus setting her before the faithful as a model for the practice of this devotion. As a further guaranty, let us bring again to your minds the earnest and oft-repeated commendations bestowed by the Holy See upon this devotion. Witness the words of the beatification brief of Blessed Margaret Mary: “Where, then, is the heart so hard and insensible as not to feel moved to make a return of love to this adorable Heart which was wounded and pierced with a lance to open to our *souls a place of rest, and secure refuge to which we may retire and find protection against the attacks and snares of the enemy.*” Witness the glowing words with which our bishops portray this Heart as the *treasury of all divine*

mercies. Witness the testimony from all parts of the Catholic world, from the first disciples of the Sacred Heart, Blessed Margaret Mary and the fervent Father de la Columbière, down to our present pontiff, Leo XIII., gloriously reigning.

And this brings us to the best of evidence, the evidence of facts which, in the language of philosophy, there is no disputing. *Contra factum nullum argumentum.* And what are these facts? Of what nature are they? They are public and private facts, my beloved hearers, universal and special facts, facts which manifest the Heart of Jesus as the overflowing source of all graces and favors. To begin with some of the earliest. In 1720 the inhabitants of Marseilles consecrated the city during a devastating pestilence to the Sacred Heart, and their confidence was richly rewarded; in 1796 the states of Tyrol and the entire country were consecrated with solemn vows to the loving Heart of Jesus, and the Tyrol remains the faithful, Catholic, unconquered Tyrol. "Tyrol," writes the Bishop of Trent, "continues steadfast and fervent in the faith in virtue of the power which she derives from the source of all strength, the Divine Heart of Jesus as her

powerful Ally." If you would have particular instances, I am not at a loss to furnish them, but rather more at a loss what to choose from the mass of testimony before me. Glance over a "Messenger of the Sacred Heart," now in its twenty-second year; run over number by number the "Favors received from the Sacred Heart," and you will find the best proof that could be offered of the truth of the divine promises. Thus I read in one of the last numbers, among the various thanksgivings recorded: for the reception of Holy Orders despite great obstacles; for admission into a boy's seminary; for wonderful assistance in religious struggles and perplexities; for the re-establishment of a feast of the Church after an interruption of almost two hundred years; for the suppression of scandalous revels in inns and hotels; for the conversion of a drunkard, and of several aged sinners on their death-beds; for the recovery of persons seriously ill; for deliverance from a deeply-rooted and grievous habit of sin; for reconciliation of a quarrel of many years' standing; for the preventing of several mixed marriages; for the favorable settlement of very troublesome business; for the averting of a great loss through the discovery

of very important papers; for the obtaining of an honorable vindication; for the adjustment of differences, and the wise course adopted by the state committee; for better health; for the healing of severe wounds and dangerous ulcers; for obtaining a good situation and good wages; for recovery from a long and severe illness, etc., etc.

Thus the praise and glory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus resounds throughout the world, resounds in spontaneous thanksgiving for benefits received, resounds earnestly inviting all to "taste and see that the Lord is sweet" (Ps. xxxiii. 9). It is evident, from the testimony of those who have experienced it, that there is no evil from which we may not obtain deliverance through the Sacred Heart; there is no petition, no prayer which is not sure of being heard by the Heart of Jesus. Yes, the Divine Heart has proved an overflowing stream of heavenly graces. It has preserved, and still preserves, the promises made by our Saviour to His holy servant: "I shall bestow unlimited, boundless graces upon all who shall have recourse to My Heart." The truth of the divine promise is proclaimed by thousands upon thousands of witnesses, and loudly published throughout

the Catholic world. I have still one of the most glorious blessings of the Heart of Jesus to set before you. We have spoken in the first sermon of the solemn consecration of all their flock to the Divine Heart of Jesus made in 1874 by the Prussian bishops. What was the result? We read it in the pastoral to the clergy and faithful issued by the same bishops in 1874, and which ran as follows: "Beloved fellow-laborers! dear Catholic Christians! You have remained faithful to your Saviour and your Church; this testimony your divinely appointed pastors bear you before the entire Christian world,—a testimony which will stand as a monument of honor to you as long as the world lasts." To whom do the bishops ascribe this result? Hear their words: "To the Saviour of the world, the Divine Pastor of our souls, the High Priest who never ceases to make intercession for us at the throne of His Heavenly Father, who never ceases to implore for us and for you the riches of heavenly grace. *Never does this prayer of the Heart of Jesus remain unheard.*" To the prayer of the Heart of Jesus, therefore, are they indebted for these great and signal graces. Through this prayer has our Heavenly Father so wonderfully strength-

ened them ; witness the further testimony borne them by their bishops: " You have steadfastly rejected all the allurements calculated to turn you from the path of duty ; you have courageously and patiently borne the heavy and bitter trials which God permitted you to meet. A spectacle to men, to angels, and to the world are ye ; a spectacle to men, to angels, and to the world is the Church in Germany. Then let us remain firmly united ; the faithful united in obedience and love to their lawful pastor ; the clergy in word and deed united in unwavering unity, and all united with the supreme pastor to whom Jesus Christ has confided His flock." Thus do the bishops loudly and solemnly proclaim the triumph of the Divine Heart of Jesus, and publish anew " that the Heart of Jesus is an impregnable fortress, an ever-open refuge in all our needs."

Am I right, then, when I affirm that this devotion is truly divine in its effects? Am I right when I number it among the most richly blest of all devotions? when I entreat you to zealously endeavor to make every effort to promote it? With deepest conviction, beloved brethren, do I bid you " Taste and see that the Lord is sweet!" " Taste and

see that the Lord is sweet!" I would like to engrave, deeply engrave this in the hearts of all my hearers.

Our Divine Redeemer in His goodness goes still further to convince us of His desire to win a return of love from men, and solemnly assures us through His holy servant that "He takes singular pleasure in being honored under this Heart of flesh, and that wherever a picture of His Sacred Heart is exposed and honored it will bring every kind of blessing." Hence Blessed Margaret Mary's anxiety to have a picture of the Sacred Heart executed as early as possible; hence her joyful *Te Deum* when she knelt with her novices for the first time before a picture of this Divine Heart. Hence the anxiety manifested by her and all disciples of the Sacred Heart to spread these pictures as widely as possible.

Again I ask, am I right to set the price I do on devotion to the Sacred Heart; to affirm that it is without doubt the most richly blessed of all devotions? Yes, from this Divine Heart, as the Bishop of Trent has truly said, there flows an inexhaustible stream of grace, and he who drinks thereof shall never thirst more. "This," the holy bishop

continues, "is not only the experience of individual Christians, but of families, parishes, and countries. Happy the heart that is devoted to the service of the Heart of Jesus; happy the families whose refuge is this adorable Heart; happy the nations who heed Its touching invitation: 'Come to me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you.' "

Beloved brethren, we all have our personal needs and requests; we are all interested in public questions and needs. Then let us faithfully follow the exhortations addressed us in the past, and bring all our cares to the Heart of Jesus; and if our petitions are not granted at once, let us not cease to pray; if we are not heard in our own way, we shall certainly be answered with the consolations, help, and strength which the Heart of Jesus reserves for us. "Taste and see that the Lord is sweet!" The more bitter our suffering, the sweeter the consolation we shall find in the Heart of Jesus; the more hopeless our position, the more manifest the assistance that awaits us. The Heart of Jesus will triumph over all enemies. Amen.

FIFTH SERMON.

How we should Honor the Heart of Jesus

“Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you.”—*Matt. xi. 28.*

THE devotion to the Divine Heart of Jesus is manifestly divine: divine in its origin, divine in its object, divine in its end, divine in its blessings. Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, established it in the world; the loving Heart of Jesus is the object for which He asks of us special veneration and love. Divine, finally, are the blessings solemnly promised by Our Lord at the time of the institution of the devotion—blessings promoting, securing, and completing man's happiness for time and eternity; blessings of every kind, fully bearing out the riches of His bounteous promises; blessings to which the Catholic world loudly and joyfully testifies. We have spoken of these blessings in a former instruction, and, I think, made it abundantly evident that they are truly divine; that they signally manifest the divine love and bounty

of God, and undeniably prove that the Heart of Jesus is in truth the treasury of divine mercies. Now, I can hardly doubt that many of my hearers are moved to desire a share in these divine favors. I have still less doubt that many of you, on the other hand, have long since tasted the sweetness and fulness of these mercies. My words to-day are addressed to both classes of persons. "*I would teach the first how they may share in these favors, and the second how they may obtain a still richer share in them,*" and thus, according to the desire of the Divine Heart of Jesus, impart the fulness of His great gift to the greatest possible number of souls. May the adorable Heart of Jesus grant us words to worthily speak of the practice of this truly divine devotion!

Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, with the blessings and favors attached to it, is intended, according to the clearly-expressed will of our Saviour, for the general good of mankind. "Publish," said He to His servant, "and let it be published throughout the world, that I will bestow boundless, unlimited graces upon all who shall earnestly have recourse to my Heart." In other words, all shall enjoy the favors of His loving Heart

who earnestly resolve to seek them. Hence it clearly follows that our Lord Himself is ready to give to every Christian, whatever his state or condition, the necessary light and indispensable grace to become a true disciple of His Sacred Heart. Moreover, our Saviour is not content with offering us His superabundant graces ; He would, if I may so speak, force them upon us. How can we otherwise interpret the words with which He first revealed this august gift?—“ My Divine Heart is so full of love for men that, being unable to contain within Itself the flames of Its burning charity, It must needs spread them abroad through thee, and manifest Itself to men to enrich them with the treasures It contains.” Hence we see our Saviour is not content with offering each and every one of us the grace adequate to make us true disciples of the Sacred Heart, but is ever ready to pour His grace without measure upon all who worthily honor His Heart. It is further evident that there is no one to whom the practice of this devotion is difficult, and that it cannot, since it is intended for all, require of us anything extravagant or extraordinary ; on the contrary, there is no devotion which so fully verifies the invitation of

the Psalmist, "Taste and see that the Lord is sweet" (Ps. xxxiii. 9), and these words of our Lord, "My yoke is sweet and my burden light" (Matt. xi. 30); nor which better enables us to realize the truth of St. Augustine's words of the service of God: "In truth, I had not thought a virtuous Christian life could be so easy and so sweet." God on His part, therefore, will send men all that is necessary and indispensable to make them true disciples of His Heart, and enable them to share in the fruits of this devotion. What must men do on their part? When we considered the chief end for which our Saviour instituted this devotion we learned that it was no other than to awaken a sincere return of love in the hearts of men, and thereby overcome the coldness, hardness, and indifference which they entertain for Him despite the innumerable proofs of love and kindness He bestows upon them. All, therefore, that helps us to true love of God helps us to become true disciples of the Divine Heart of our Saviour. If you would become a true disciple of His Heart you must banish from yours all that is opposed to true love of God, and cherish the dispositions which love demands. Has our

Saviour left us in any doubt as to what this love consists in? Nothing, my beloved brethren, could be plainer, clearer, more explicit than the first great commandment of love: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind" (Matt. xxii. 37). No less clear is the further explanation which our Saviour Himself deigned to give in the following words: "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them: he it is that loveth Me;" and the same divine lips tell us: "He that loveth Me shall be loved by My Father; and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him" (John xiv. 21). "Hence it is abundantly evident that there can be no question of true love for Jesus, of true devotion to the Sacred Heart, if we are not firmly resolved to faithfully observe His commandments, to take pains to avoid sin, to fly the occasions of sin, and to follow the example of our Saviour in the conscientious fulfilment of our duties. Therefore I need not tell you that true devotion to the Sacred Heart does not consist in reciting a greater number of prayers, in honoring the pictures of this Divine Heart, in wearing the scapulars bearing Its image.

Beloved brethren, all these things are good, praiseworthy, and to be commended, but they do not constitute true devotion to the Sacred Heart; they do not open to us that promised source of grace from which we may draw the secret of true life; that is, the strength to faithfully observe the commandments of God. For this reason it may happen—I add this for the enlightenment of many, and in justification, so to speak, of our dear Lord—it may happen that some of you doubt the truth of the divine promises, having prayed and petitioned the Heart of Jesus without either receiving what you asked or finding the rest and peace of heart you expected. But your hearts were wanting in dispositions absolutely indispensable to a good prayer. Can we justly expect treasures of grace from the Divine Heart, that Heart that sacrificed Itself without reserve for the expiation of sin, when our hearts are attached to sin, when we foster and cherish in our hearts that which the Divine Heart must regard with deepest loathing? When you yourself recognize this as impossible, because unworthy of God, you must also see that true devotion to the Sacred Heart must spring from the heart.

How are we to acquire this love? How shall we make ourselves worthy of the promises of Christ? The sister of St. Thomas Aquinas once said to him, "What must I do to become a saint?" The great saint answered, "You must will to become one." I give the same answer to you, beloved brethren, when you ask what you must do to make a true return of love to our Saviour. You must earnestly will it. You must have a firm and determined will that in gratitude to your Saviour you will walk faithfully in the way of His commandments; that no earthly pleasures, no sensual allurements, no temporal prospects and promises, or even threats and persecution, shall have power to separate you from the love of your Saviour. Then you will truly love Him; then you may confidently knock at the door of His Heart overflowing with graces, and a stream of divine graces will be poured upon you. You must earnestly will it, dear sinner, now that you know how worthy to be loved is this Heart of your Saviour, now that you know that It contains treasures of grace calculated to wrest us from the brink of perdition and to obtain for us not only pardon of sin but assurance of salvation. You must earnestly

will from this moment to cast off the unworthy chains which a hard tyrant had forged for you, and meet with the firmness of a true Christian the prince of darkness who has crept into your heart in the guise of an angel of light and assumed the mastery of it. You must will it; and therefore resist from this moment the sin in your heart whose yoke you have hitherto worn with pleasure; you must avoid the occasions which have caused you to fall into sin; you must break with the companions who have led you into the path of vice. You must will it with your whole soul, for we have to do with a jealous God who will not suffer a divided service, who abhors half-heartedness. In this way only can you fittingly respond to that love of which the Sacred Heart is the centre and focus.

Behold our Saviour burning with love for you, yearning for your love; contemplate Him raised on the cross, and say to yourself, "This Heart was broken with love for me on the cross; for me was It cruelly pierced; for the expiation of my sins was shed the last drop of Its blood." Contemplate It encircled with a thorny crown; count, if you can, the wounds of this tender Heart; count, if you can, the pangs It endured from the first hour

of Its earthly existence until It broke on the cross, and then say to yourself, "All this suffering was borne for me; my sins inflicted it upon Him;" and when you see this Divine Victim still burning with love, when you see this martyred Heart languishing for a return of your love, when you see the streams of grace and mercy which It pours upon men, Its executioners, can you still resist Its loving tenderness? How truly had St. Bernard reason to exclaim: "Who will not love this wounded Heart? Who will not make It a return of love?" With reason did Pius IX. write in Blessed Margaret Mary's beatification brief: "Where then is the heart so hard and insensible as not to be moved to make a return of love to this adorable Heart which was wounded and pierced on the cross to open to our souls a place of rest, a secure refuge to which we may retire and find protection against the attacks and snares of the enemy? Who will not feel impelled to zealously honor this Sacred Heart from which issued blood and water, the fountain of our salvation and life?"

O man, your heart is created for love; give it to the object most worthy of all love: give it to the infinitely loving Heart of your Sav

iour, through the firm resolution to henceforth will nothing that Jesus does not will, to will all that Jesus wills, to will all as Jesus wills—in brief, to honor Jesus as the sole and supreme Master of your heart, and therefore to joyfully renounce all that is opposed to the reign of Jesus in your heart, to sacrifice everything rather than lose the friendship and grace of Jesus. Then you will be a true and fervent disciple of the Heart of Jesus. This, my dear friends, is true devotion to the Divine Heart of Jesus; this is the one end of all the pious practices and devotions introduced by holy souls and approved by the Church. This is the starting-point of our resemblance to the Divine Heart, the foundation of all the virtues we learn and receive from the Heart of Jesus.

I have not the least doubt that many of my hearers who have so diligently attended and attentively followed the sermons on the Heart of Jesus have long since firmly resolved to become faithful disciples of this Heart so worthy of all love; but I must confess to some doubt as to whether this good intention may not like other good resolutions fail to endure. Our experience in this respect is so often like that of men overcome

with sleep when they should pray or work : they rub their eyes, start up, sit down again, nod from time to time, then doze for a moment, vainly imagining that after a moment's indulgence they will be better able to pray or work, and so they fall into a profound slumber and quietly and placidly sleep the sleep of the just. How then, beloved brethren, shall we meet this weakness? A spiritual teacher, comparing man to a watch, gives a very practical piece of advice. "Man," he says, "with all his good will and all his holy desires, is like a watch. The tendency of a watch is to run down; if we do not wind it every day its motion becomes gradually slower, the little wheels cease to revolve and the hands cease to move. So it is with our good will; therefore we must daily give it the impetus it needs. The time to impart this new strength and life to the spiritual watch-works is the morning, and the key is reflection and prayer." This brings us to another very important point in devotion to the Divine Heart, and that is persevering, confident prayer.

Love for the Sacred Heart is a grace; a great, a divine grace; a grace which God wills we should ask of His love; a special grace which He would have us earnestly im-

plore. "Ask and you shall receive" (John xvi. 24). "Your Father from heaven will give the good Spirit to them that ask Him" (Luke xi. 13). Therefore the faithful disciple of the Heart of Jesus has daily recourse to this Divine Heart : he confidently addresses his petitions to It, he goes to It with confidence in all his anxieties, he confidently brings to It each day all his good resolutions. I purposely emphasize the word confidence, for it is the solution of every anxious doubt, every tormenting care and anguish ; it is the briefest expression of our certain assurance that all that flows from the Heart of Jesus must prosper and bear fruit for time and eternity. "I will bestow boundless, unlimited graces upon all who shall have recourse to my Heart," has our Divine Saviour solemnly assured us. Hence the disciple of the Heart of Jesus, knowing this, is not satisfied to confidently greet this august Object of his love once a day ; no, everything impels him to have recourse to this Divine Heart : his own needs as well as those of others, his own sins and weakness as well as those of others. If you would become true disciples of the Heart of Jesus, if you would share in Its superabundant graces, pray, pray daily, pray often,

go confidently in all your anxieties to this Fountain-head of all mercy and grace.

Yes, beloved brethren, to the children of the Sacred Heart the sight of sin itself, of their own as well as that of others, is a powerful incentive in this devotion. While the first causes them to humble themselves the more, the sight of the second inspires them with a holy fear, and both excite them to offer reparation and expiation to this Heart with which they are so closely allied. Reparation is what our Saviour earnestly desired, and it is inseparable from true love. Would you think a child truly loved his parents if he were indifferent to injuries inflicted upon them by one of his brothers? No; a loving child in such a case would suffer and grieve with his parents, and instinctively try to afford them some new pleasure or gratification to mitigate their suffering. How much reason has the loving Heart of our Saviour to complain of the black ingratitude manifested by men despite His willing and loving sacrifice—of the malice of men who, so far from being satisfied with this striking proof of His love, continually renew His suffering, frequently pursuing Him with truly satanic rage! We shall speak more particularly of

this in our next instruction. Meanwhile we think that all who have eyes to see will agree with us when we assert that at the present day hell has risen in all its rage and with its innumerable hosts is warring upon Jesus and His anointed. This is a fact, a most sad fact which may shake the love of weak Christians, but which will only excite truly loving hearts to make a greater return of love.

O my Jesus, Thy loving Heart suffers; It suffers deeply through the ingratitude of men; and yet Thou continuest to love what prepares for Thee so much suffering! Hear my resolution, hear my prayer! I also have contributed to the suffering of Thy loving Heart; I have been among the number of Thy executioners, Thy persecutors; but this may not, this shall not be more. Mindful of Thy boundless love which encompassed me despite my black ingratitude, mindful of Thy boundless mercies which accompanied me even when I was Thy enemy, mindful of Thy desire to bestow upon me in richest measure the treasures of Thy love, I solemnly promise Thee to gratefully honor Thy loving Heart, and through love of Thee to faithfully fulfil the commands of Thy wisdom; I promise Thee to suffer, to endure all things rather

than betray Thee, rather than sell Thee for a few pieces of silver, rather than place Thee after Barabbas. Heart of Jesus! Thou wilt be my place of refuge, my rest, my beatitude in life and in death. Amen.



SIXTH SERMON.

Devotion to the Heart of Jesus Suitable for the Age.

“ I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled ?”—*Luke xii. 49.*

WE have reached, by the grace of God, our last Lenten instruction. The conclusion of all our instructions is that we should faithfully honor and trust in the Heart of Jesus ; that we should confidently have recourse in all our anxieties to this Treasury of divine mercies. Such is the will of our Divine Saviour, confirmed by extraordinary blessings and innumerable and striking answers to prayer. Such is the will of our holy mother the Church, whose head, the vicegerent of Jesus Christ, earnestly recommends us to go in all our needs to this fatherly and loving Heart. Such is the will of our right reverend bishops, who, in their collective writings, as well as in their special pastorals, have repeatedly pointed out to us, and still point out to us, this inexhaustible

source of divine mercy. We find in all this a powerful incentive to make us correspond to the expectation of the Divine Heart of Jesus by the faithful observance of all the means which we have just been considering. I think, too, that I can also point out to you a special circumstance which of itself imperatively requires the diligent practice of devotion to the Heart of Jesus. A glance at the age in which this devotion was introduced into the world, and at the age in which we live, will, I hope, not only make this very clear to you, but strengthen and imprint deeply in your souls our resolution to seek everything in the Sacred Heart of Jesus: *for the circumstances of the times imperatively send us to the Divine Heart of Jesus.*

St. Gertrude once saw St. John the Evangelist in a vision, and asked him why he, who had such intimate intercourse with our Saviour, had written so little of His Sacred Heart. St. John answered: "What I have written I wrote by command of the Holy Ghost. Our Saviour will reveal His Heart at a later period as an efficacious means of rekindling His love in the cold hearts of men." The period in which our Divine Saviour instituted the public veneration of

His Heart was a very sad age: it was the beginning of Jansenism, that heresy evolved from the deepest depths of hell, that heresy which robbed God of His most consoling attributes, His boundless mercy and infinite patience, and converted the loving Creator and Redeemer of men into a tyrant who imposed upon men laws which they could not fulfil, and denied them His all-powerful assistance. Wrapping itself in the cloak of the strictest morality, it prescribed the severest measures in the administration of the sacrament of penance, and unattainable purity for the reception of holy Communion, thereby closing to men the richest source of Christian life. The truly diabolic character of this heresy was thus early manifested, and became, if possible, still more apparent through its alliance with hell against the rock of Peter. Disobedience, hatred, and antipathy towards Rome were preached everywhere, and it was maintained that men entertaining such sentiments were, and could remain, Catholics. Most cunning were the snares devised by this dangerous sect to win protectors and increase the number of its followers. It succeeded in obtaining powerful supporters in the royal court of Paris and

the imperial court of Vienna; it brought endless evils and misery upon bishops and priests ensnared by its subtleties, and laid the foundation for the terrible work of the French revolution, when the worship of a vile woman was substituted for that of the living God.

When hell seemed to be thus approaching the height of its power, and preparing its triumphal progress through the world, the Sun of grace rose, invisibly at first, but soon shone in all its splendor. And this glowing, life-giving Sun was the Divine Heart of Jesus, than which no more striking opposition to the false and lying doctrine of Jansenism could be conceived. This adorable Heart preached love, grace, mercy for all, even the most grievous sinners; It was the powerful magnet which drew hearts to the visible as well as the invisible centre of the Christian religion from which men had been so violently driven by heretical doctrines,—the magnet which drew men in love and obedience to Rome, the visible centre of Catholic unity; which drew them to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, the invisible centre of the Catholic Church. Our Divine Saviour desired to see His Heart honored by all men in order to

give a death-blow to this execrable heresy. Nothing could more efficaciously destroy its abominable teachings than the knowledge of this Heart burning, overflowing with love for men,- -this Heart which assured them through Its holy servant that so great was Its love for them that, were it necessary, for the salvation of only one soul It would willingly take upon Itself the nameless sufferings It endured for all; that It could no longer retain the flames of this love with which It was consumed; that It would place no limit or bounds to the bestowal of grace upon all who had recourse to this Heart. Could anything more crushingly rebuke the proud, rebellious teachers of error than the gentle counsel of this Sacred Heart: "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart" (Matt. xi. 28)?

But to come to our own times, do they not bear a striking resemblance to the age in which Jesus revealed His Divine Heart to the world? Do we not find the same appalling coldness and indifference towards God and everything holy? Yes, men frequently are not satisfied with turning and wresting hearts from God, but would, were it possible, drag the Almighty Creator of heaven and

earth from His throne. The history of our day records the most horrible crimes against God, against Christ, against the Church and her head, against innocence and virtue, against every social right and duty; and these crimes are not only perpetrated with satanic deliberation, but in cold blood approved and publicly extolled. Satan, in a word stalks through the world, followed by an innumerable throng of exultant satellites from all conditions and all ranks in life. Man sees himself encompassed with a chaos and wild disorder which he is powerless to rectify, and every quiet thinker asks himself: How will it all end? What will it lead to? Whither are we drifting? But in the midst of this night and obscurity which darken the spirit and threaten to spread ever farther and farther, the Sun of grace shines with still greater splendor in the firmament of the Church: the Divine Heart of our Saviour rises before us, shedding luminous rays of grace and glowing love. We are invited, nay, implored, to fix our eyes upon this triumphal sign of victory; to hasten to this Heart and draw from It the fulness of light, strength, and perseverance. In this cold unloving age the bride of Christ directs us to the

loving Heart of her Founder and Spouse, Who offers, not a few marks of love, but *all* the love of His Divine Heart, that it may soften and enkindle a return of love in ours. In this sensual enervating age the Church, the teacher of mortification shows us the Heart of her Master, which, as the seat and source of love, was also the centre of all the suffering which It endured from the first moment of Its earthy existence until It was broken and pierced on the cross. She shows us that Heart which innocently endured unspeakable suffering, endured it purely for love of us. This is what we are told by the symbols which accompanied the revelation of this Heart: by the deep broad wound inflicted by our sins; the cross, the sum of all suffering and sorrow, issuing from the centre of the Heart; and the thorns which the ungrateful earth bore to the second Adam.

Yes, the Heart of Jesus is the remedy chosen and appointed by God Himself for the great evils of the day; and any one who considers the needs of his times will confidently and devoutly have recourse to the Sacred Heart of the Saviour. The spirit of this Heart is directly contrary to the spirit of the age; if we were to represent the latter,

it would be in the form of a heart without the cross—that, is without faith ; a heart without thorns, yet apparently encircled with roses—that is, a heart thirsting for earthly things ; a heart from which issue no burning flames—that is, a cold and loveless heart.

Am I right, beloved brethren, when, after the example of Archbishop Vicari of Freiburg, I thus portray to you the ruling spirit of the times? Does it not seem as if we were already nearing the time when, according to the Apostle, “the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth, and is lifted up above all that is called God, or that is holy” (2 Thess. ii. 3, 4)? There can hardly be found in history a time when so much has been said of faith, and when men have believed so little as at the present day. All assail the Catholic faith, however great their ignorance, or meagre their knowledge of it. Not only Catholics, but Protestants, Jews, Turks, infidels of all classes, deem themselves fitted to sit in judgment, to decide, to determine upon matters of faith. In this age of unbelief the Heart of our Redeemer shines more resplendently than ever with the Cross which preaches faith more powerfully than all else ; hence the earnest prayer of the *Apostle*:

“God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ” (Galat. vi. 14). And again: “We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling-block, and unto the gentiles foolishness” (1 Cor. i. 23). The Christian embraces this cross, clasping it, clinging to it more firmly the more the malice of the evil one, united with base sensuality, endeavors to wrest it from him.

The heart of modern times is a heart void of noble aspirations. This is the necessary, the inevitable result of infidelity. When man ceases to maintain the existence of eternal goodness, when he abandons or questions the belief of redemption through Christ, his heart, yearning for some visible, tangible object to cling to, turns to the pursuit of earthly treasure, of sensual enjoyments; his life, in a word, becomes that of a pagan, and every noble aspiration is stifled. And, alas! they are increasing, these modern pagans who either have never entered the Church through holy baptism, or who have deliberately abandoned all religious teachings and noble aims because, like the pagans of old, they look for nothing in a future life.

In this age so devoid of hope it is the thorn-

encircled Heart of Jesus with Its sacrificial symbols which shows us our true destiny; which impressively reminds us of the value of a human soul created for a glorious end; which forcibly tells us, "The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that shall be revealed in us" (Rom. viii. 18); which shows us suffering as the path which Jesus trod, as the royal road which leads to the crown of life. Thus, the Heart of our Redeemer is a salutary and efficacious solace in the sufferings which come to all, but which are truly sweetened and softened to all who bear them with Jesus.

The heart of the present age is a heart devoid of love. This is a fact which we cannot sufficiently deplore; a fact which shows most clearly the decline of Christianity, for our Saviour has made love the characteristic mark of His true disciples: "By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another" (John xiii. 35). At the present day, however, every one seeks himself, and considers his neighbor only in so far as he can use him for his own ends. Hence the abyss between the rich and the poor, between the so-called fortunate and unfortunate ones of this world; hence it is that

there is so much party strife, enmity, hatred, and so little love.

What is to remedy this capital evil? What is to rekindle love in the cold hearts of men, if not the loving Heart of our Redeemer which so loudly preaches love? This Heart sending forth streams of grace and burning rays of love! This Heart that endured all things for all men; this Heart that sought not Itself, but us alone, in all that It suffered; this Heart that offers all things to all who lovingly draw near to It—only this Heart can rekindle love which is extinguished, and will rekindle it in all that confidently have recourse to It.

Yes, the Heart of Jesus is the remedy for the great evils and needs of our time. I can make this still clearer and more comprehensible from another point of view. The fundamental errors of the day are chiefly two: one works outside the Church and draws souls from its pale, the other would remain in the Church and build a church within the Church. The first is simple infidelity, the modern paganism of which we have just spoken, and to which the right reverend bishops already quoted have so earnestly referred in several pastorals. This modern

paganism has no place for the Church, no place for Christ, the God-man; it represents man either as a god or as descended from an animal. Who does not at once recognize how completely devotion to the Divine Heart of Jesus must destroy this error, resting as it does upon the acknowledgment of the holy Trinity, of the Incarnation of Christ, and preaching so forcibly the adorable nature of the Redeemer? Yes, beloved brethren, it shows man his true place in creation, sets before him his great dignity on the one hand, and preserves him on the other from vain self-conceit.

The second fundamental error is that schismatic spirit drawing men from Rome, the centre of Catholic unity; a spirit which since the institution of the devotion, to the present day, has appeared under various forms; a spirit which, particularly at the present day, unites with and promotes everything inimical to the Church. Shall I even intimate to you the venomous utterances, the rancorous gall which the serpent is daily hissing forth against Rome, against the august head of the Church? No, beloved brethren, my lips refuse to utter them.

Devotion to the Heart of Jesus is destined

to efficaciously oppose this great error. Like all general devotions of the Church it had no true value until recommended by Rome. But Rome has imprinted the seal of holiness upon this blessed devotion; she has earnestly recommended it to all Christians, recommended it through rich indulgences. She never ceases to hold it up as the surest means of salvation and victory. He who honors the Heart of the Saviour is also devoted to His visible representative on earth; he who consecrates himself with full abandonment to the Heart of Jesus will not be carried away by the tide of ungodliness which is sweeping men from Rome to plunge them into the lake of fire and brimstone. We must again acknowledge that devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is in the truest sense of the word most seasonable, that the condition of the times compels us to have recourse to the Heart of Jesus.

Yes, the condition of the times compels us to have recourse to this rich fountain of graces. We live in evil and dangerous times, in times abounding in temptations and trials not only for the rulers of the Church, the Pope, the bishops, and the clergy, but also for the people. This is a fact which does not need

to be proved. We live in a time when the Lord of the harvest holds His fan in His hand to cleanse His floor and separate the chaff from the wheat (Matt. iii. 2). Shall we be found as wheat, or rejected as chaff? Many that men deem wheat are already rejected as chaff; much that men have built has already proved futile. How is it with us, beloved brethren? I will not press the question further, but only remind you that in times of special danger and great trials we need special graces, special blessings; where can we more easily and more abundantly find them than in the Heart of our Redeemer? Has not Pius IX. solemnly assured us that "Jesus permitted His Heart to be pierced on the cross, to open to souls a place of rest and secure refuge to which they may retire and find protection against the assaults and persecutions of the enemy"? In these perilous times we need a refuge which is never closed, the access to which, despite the efforts of the enemy, remains ever open to us: and we find it in the Heart of our Redeemer. No, beloved brethren, nothing can ever deprive us of refuge in this loving Heart; It is ever open to us, to afford us compensation for all that human malice and injustice rob us of, to give

us that rich measure of consolation which enables us to rejoice in suffering, and that divine strength which, despite our weakness, enables us to say with the Apostle: "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me" (Philipp. iv. 13). In a word, we find in this adorable Heart the remedy of all evils, the meaning of the trials with which we are visited, and the pledge of glorious victory for the Church. "Publish and cause it to be published throughout the world," says our Saviour, "that I will place no limit or measure to the bestowal of grace upon all who shall have recourse to my Heart." Preserve these great words, my brethren; engrave them deeply in your hearts, repeat them to your household, and frequently, daily, yea, hourly implore the Divine Heart to permit you to share in this superabundant fulness of grace.

This is my prayer, beloved brethren, the last request I make of you at the end of the Lenten sermons. The Divine Heart of Jesus merits this confidence as the love-inflamed Heart of the God-man burning with desire for souls, for souls who will confidently have recourse to Him. Our glorious Pontiff Leo XIII. bears aloft the banner of the Divine Heart of Jesus, proclaiming to the Christian

world "that sinful man will find in this adorable Heart a place of refuge where he will be sheltered from the decrees of Divine Justice, an ark of salvation where he will escape the universal ruin, a true altar of expiation where Divine Justice will be appeased and the scourge averted" (Address of Nov. 24, 1879). The banner of the Heart of Jesus is borne aloft by the episcopacy and joyfully followed by the clergy and laity; the universal cry of the noble army is, Through the Divine Heart of Jesus we shall be victorious over all the enemies of the Church. Let us follow this victorious Guide which God in His love has given us; let us give ourselves with all the fervor and love of our hearts to the Heart of Jesus; let us abandon, let us consecrate ourselves to this Heart for time and eternity. May our watch-word in life and in death be the Heart of Jesus; our only desire, to dwell in this loving Heart, and to find there our happiness for all eternity. Glory, honor, and praise be to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, now and forever more. Amen.

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